

CHAPTEE XXXI.

1814.

Curious conversation between General Reynier and the Emperor Alexander — Napoleon repulses the Prussians — The Russians at Fontainebleau — Battle of Brienne — Sketch of the campaign of Franco — Supper after the battle of Champ Aubert — Intelligence of the arrival of the Due d'Angouleme and the Comte d'Artois in France — The battle of the ravens and the eagle — Battle of Craoxme — Departure of the Pope and the Spanish Princes — Capture of a convoy — Macdonald at the Emperor's headquarters — The inverted cipher — ANNEX.

I WAS always persuaded, and everything I have since seen has confirmed my opinion, that the Allies entering France had no design of restoring the House of Bourbon, or of imposing any Government whatever on the French people.¹ They came to destroy and not to found. That which they wished to destroy from the commencement of their success was Napoleon's supremacy, in order to prevent the future invasions with which they believed Europe would still be constantly threatened. If, indeed, I had entertained any doubt on this subject it would have been banished by the account I heard of

¹ This statement is in complete agreement with the *Memoirs of the Baron de Vitrolles* (Paris, Charpentier 1884), in which we read of the first communications of the Royalists in Paris with the Allies. Vitrolles saw Stailion, the Austrian Plenipotentiary at Chatillon, apparently on the 10th March, 1814, and was told by him that if Napoleon acceded to conditions which gave the Allies sufficient guaranties, they only fought to obtain peace, and would seize it with eagerness. Metternich, a few days later, met him in the same way, remarking on the silence of France. "We have traversed France, where we have lived in it for more than two months, and nothing like this has been shown to us. . . . We have found in the population with which we have mixed nothing of what you announce, neither need of repose, remembrance of former days, nor even any general expression of discontent with the Emperor." Though the Comte d'Artois was close to the Allies' headquarters they appeared not to know or to care anything about him or the other Princes. There is, however, some inconsistency between Vitrolles' description and Metternich's own account of his conversation with Alexander, apparently in January, 1814. "Napoleon's power is broken and will not rise again. . . . When the overthrow of the Empire comes there will be only the Bourbons to take possession again of their undying rights" (*Metternich*, vol. i, p. 228). Either Metternich dissembled very much with Vitrolles, or the silence of the occupied provinces had changed his ideas; see *De Vitrolles*.